Independent Choices

HCBS Settings Requirement

Independence in making life choices, including but not limited to, daily activities, physical environment, and with whom to interact.

People retain the ability to make choices about how they spend their time in any given setting and have opportunities to participate in age-appropriate activities. As a provider, you should engage with the person and the team using person-centered thinking to ensure you:

- support people in life-informed "real" choices and autonomy;
- offer people actual experiences on which they can base future choices;
- create plans for the appropriate balance between autonomy and safety;
- give a person's personal preferences priority. When there is a difference of opinion with a guardian or provider preference (unless for a documented health and safety reason) there needs to be open dialog where agreement is met;
- support and inspire individuals to work toward their goals, dreams and priorities.

Best practice suggestions

- The provider supports people to participate in activities of their choice that are consistent with the goals and objectives identified in their plan for supports. This includes activities within the setting, as well as provider-organized activities in the community.
- The provider is encouraged to use the natural environment as frequently as possible to help people learn new skills. Learning a skill in the natural environment is more effective than "classroom" training.
- The provider creates a decision-making process that supports people in making activity choices freely and fairly.
- People can access things like a radio, television or computer and choose leisure activities.
- The physical setting can adequately support a variety of individual needs and activities, such as having space for people to move about and allow individual and group activities.
- People can choose with whom they would like to do activities.
- People can provide suggestions about activities through a comment box, small group sessions or by meeting with a preferred staff.
- The provider supports individuals with developing individual calendars of activities versus "group" calendars for everyone in a particular setting.

Examples

- Sharon has a desired outcome of learning how to use money to shop. Sharon's group day services provider brings her to a store to shop instead of using pretend money or a toy cash register in the center setting.
- Marcus played guitar in a band while he was in high school prior to his car accident that caused his brain injury when he was 20. Marcus recently moved into a sponsored residential home. His bandmates still meet regularly a few Fridays a month at the local pub for live music. Marcus, his provider, and his support coordinator were able to work out a plan that supports Marcus to see his friends at the pub on Friday nights. Marcus's plan includes text messaging the provider at scheduled intervals to say he is fine or request support, Marcus communicating with his friends who agree to provide natural supports,

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returning to the residence by an agreed upon time, and planning transportation options to and from the pub.

Red Flags ⚑ -- Practices to Avoid

⚑ Provider makes the decision that Marcus (above) cannot go to the local pub because alcohol is being served.

⚑ The provider forces or coerces a person to participate when he/she does not wish to participate in an activity because it is "on the schedule" or "what everyone else is doing."

⚑ The provider punishes a person for not participating in an activity.

⚑ The provider develops activity schedules without input from the people in the setting.

⚑ The provider develops activity schedules based on staff preference and availability.

Acknowledgements:
Idaho- Welcome to HCBS Rules Guidance Section of the Provider Toolkit
Minnesota- A Provider's Guide To Putting the HCBS Rule Into Practice
Wyoming-HCB Setting Improvement Strategies Guidance for Case Manageers, Providers, Participants & Guardians
South Dakota-Guide to Expectations and Compliance

HCBS Toolkit: All Settings/Independent Choices/schedule and activities
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